At midnight also they sometimes break their sleep and men [200] and women together form into a circle and jump and shout in order to win the favor of heaven.

During lunar and solar eclipses they gather together to implore the cessation of the inexplicable phenomenon. Here, however, they have dealings with an a'hŏt whom they summon and fear.

These are the only acts of worship of which I have knowledge, and they show the inclination of these savages toward sabianism or the religion of stars; yet the sun does not play a part amongst the objects of their worship or of their summoning. According to Faustino the interpreter, they only get together to conjure up the sun's reappearance when it has been hidden behind clouds for a long time (an extremely rare occurrence in that region) or if a storm is coming up -- and even then it is not the sun but the a'hŏt itself which they conjure because they are being deprived of the light and warmth of the beneficial star.

One can therefore perceive that among these Indians also it is the women who start the worship process and who, as was the case amongst the ancient pagan nations, have found in the pale moon the element most suited to their condition and therefore more able and better disposed to protect them. The sun, on the other hand, so dissimilar from the temperament of womankind, seems to await the worship of men, but they are not so prone to be influenced by fears, hopes and prayers as are the women.

I have not seen idols in any of the places to which my curiosity has guided me to search for them, and my guides have always denied their existence. The Indians' outlook however does not seem to be one which would find the acceptance of idols difficult. In addition to that semi-worship of the heavenly bodies which has been alluded to it is probable that every object in nature having particular characteristics, be they terrifying or beneficial or mysterious, calls forth some response from the Indian which may be close to adoration.

MA 778

Mr. Braly, an engineer who has traveled in that part of the Chaco in the vicinity of the Salado River, assures me that the Mocovi Indians of those parts will not leave the place where the Aerolite is to be found which fell in the last century with A terrible noise and blinding flash of light.

Mo 778

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12

M 727 562

»before the Indians parted with their trophy they demanded that their old women should be allowed to sing and dance with it». It is a pity that Nordenskiöld, dominated by his exclusive interest to obtain a rare Indian »curiosity», did not avail himself of the excellent opportunity to inquire as to the ideas which the Indians connected with this scalp-dance of the women. We must look for an explanation from other sources. In the account I have given of the war customs of the Jibaros I have shown that they are wholly founded on magical ideas. The hair and head of the slain enemy is regarded as the seat of his soul or spirit and therefore is full of mysterious power. In fact, through the dances and other ceremonies performed with the scalp or head, the trophy is turned into a fetish which will promote the luck of the victor in various respects. The fact that the women play the most important rôle at the scalp-feasts — which seems to be almost a general rule — is also due to special magical ideas. The most important of the beneficial effects ascribed to the trophy is that it promotes fertility and renders the domestic animals prolific. Since, according to the belief of uncivilized peoples, woman is, as it were, the symbol of fertility, not only in the human world, but also in the animal world and in nature, it is reasonable to assume that women perform the scalp-dance precisely to promote fertility by means of the lucky object. Such is the case for instance among the Jibaros, where the dance of »supplication» round the trophy is professedly resorted to with a view to making the harvest abundant and the domestic animals prolific. Evidently the Chaco Indians entertain similar ideas. Since the head or the scalp is full of spiritual power we can also easily understand that the Indians believe themselves to be »inspired with courage» by drinking from the trophy.

M [778]

T 622 554 727

Special honour is paid among the Tobas to chiefs who have carried a war to a successful end. The ordinary chiefs receive confirmation in their dignity by the Council of the Old Men, and the young temporary leader, elected for that particular war expedition, is made an ordinary chief in recognition of his merits.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

on the sick woman. Then, as she seemed to have quited down, they started smoking and talking together. The possessed woman even accepted a cigarette. 755

Observations made by natives during the performance: The adornments are worn by the patient on behalf of the spirit who is fond of the colors. The songs and the noise of the bells are also intended to please the spirit who, charmed by the ornaments and the noise, gets quieter and leaves the patient. 755 776

During this treatment another group of about eight Indians were participating in a similar ceremony. They were dancing around a kind of improvised altar which consisted of a stick surrounded by four smaller ones forming a cross. The central stick was topped by palm leaves, the ends of which were wrapped in paper strips painted red. The four other sticks bore palm leaves painted red with the ends cut off. These sticks were inserted into wooden stands painted alternately red and black and connected in pairs by transverse rods. The whole structure was resting on some rags. A rolled poncho belonging to the medicine-man had been laid near the central stick. The ground for the ceremony had been carefully swept. According to my informant the central stick contained the injurious element which had caused the disease. That stick was supposed to be loaded with bad influences and I was warned not to touch it. 755 778

The dancers wore different costumes. Two of them had belts of ostrich feathers, and feather wreaths on their heads. In addition they wore bells and rattles on their breasts, around their loins and their ankles. Around their necks they wore necklaces of sea shells and in one hand they held a bunch of ostrich feathers. The other dancers wore their ordinary clothes with the exception of their headbands and the bells and feathers they wore on their ankles. 755 535 301

When I arrived they were dancing in a circle around the altar, from right to left, looking straight ahead. Their dance step might be defined as a jerky jog-trot. They accompanied 755 535